

The average, everyday American citizen usually does not take the challenge to live and experience the vigorous lifestyle of a soldier fighting for one's country. The author, an American soldier fighting in Iraq during the 21st century, writes an email to his family and friends back home, utilizing the concepts of rhetoric such as diction, persona, and appeals to ethos, pathos, and logos as well as components of tone such as imagery and language to ultimately provoke a sympathetic feeling for the writer.

The soldier starts his letter in the first sentence by saying: "I know a number of you have been...to take a small mental voyage" (1-2). The soldier starts off by inviting the reader to join him in his vivid description of what life as a soldier is really like. He uses a welcoming language to catch the reader's attention and hopefully create interest in what they are going to read along his journey. Likewise, the language in his welcoming tome complements his use of rhetoric, as he tries to appeal to pathos by making the reader feel safe as well as confident in what the author is going to say. Finally, the soldier's attempt to build security and trust with the reader can also appeal to ethos, as the soldier tries to gain a reputation as a respectful and kind person by welcoming the reader before he gets into detail about his unordinary experiences.

The writer then proceeds to begin describing the living conditions as a soldier by saying: "Go to your vacuum, open the canister, and pour it all over you...from the dust cloud you kicked up" (3-7). First and foremost, the soldier is trying to create a vivid picture in the reader's mind of how disgusting the living area really is by comparing it to that of what is inside a vacuum. This image produces a feeling of filth for the reader, which then appeals to pathos by creating sympathy and sorrow for the soldier living in such vile conditions. The soldier uses rhetoric to make his loved ones feel sorry for the conditions he is forced to live in. Also, he utilizes a somewhat commanding and instructional tone by telling the reader what to do in order to create the image in their head through action words such as go, open, pour, and roll. Lastly, the soldier uses the simple concept of a vacuum, an item that most if not everyone can relate to, and ends up using an appeal to logos by using clear central ideas to create an image. Most people who have ever used a vacuum know the debris that is collected in the vacuum is filthy, and the soldier uses it to his advantage to paint a descriptive picture in the mind of the reader and ultimately provoke sympathy for such a wretched environment he must live in.

Towards the end of the email, the writer is in full swing in his description of his lifestyle and says: "Ever stagger to the john at 0400? Try it in a frozen rock garden" (20-21). To start, he creates the feel of talking to a soldier through his diction. He uses words such as john and 0400 to refer to going to the bathroom at four o'clock in the morning. His word choice justifies how he can incorporate his army terminology to relate it to a common household item in a toilet and military time as a substitute for describing regular time. Also, the writer takes the normal practice of going to the bathroom and magnifies it by describing how he must venture over the rough Iraq terrain just to make it to the bathroom. He does this to help his persona as a rigid, tough-as-nails soldier since the general reputation of an American soldier includes being disciplined and fearful of nothing. Finally, he refers to this instance to once again appeal to feelings through pathos by making the reader feel sympathy for his difficult task. Likewise, the author wants the reader to feel appreciation for the simplicity of going to the bathroom without having to face physical obstacles such as walking over cold, rugged terrain.

Throughout the email, the soldier constantly goes back to using rhetoric as well as tone to produce sympathy for what he has to experience on a day-to-day basis. His ultimate goal is to turn the readers' sympathy for him into appreciation for how lucky they are living a comfortable lifestyle as compared to that of a 21st century soldier living an extremely simplistic life and sacrificing himself for his loved ones' freedom.